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SUBJECT: U.S. MISSION ROME AND BIOTECHNOLOGY IN 2002

¶1. SUMMARY: THE U.S. MISSION TO THE UN AGENCIES IN ROME PROVIDES A VERY GOOD PLATFORM FOR PROMOTING AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD TO A DIVERSE AND INFLUENTIAL AUDIENCE FROM DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. A LOOK BACK AT THE MISSION'S BIOTECH ADVOCACY IN 2002 SHOWS HOW IMPORTANT IT IS TO KEEP CLOSE TABS ON THIS ISSUE, PARTICULARLY IN UN BODIES THAT PURPORT TO BE NEUTRAL BUT THAT MAY CARRY THEIR OWN BIASES. BIOTECH WILL CONTINUE TO BE AN IMPORTANT ISSUE AT THE ROME AGENCIES IN 2003; THE U.S. MISSION ROME STANDS READY TO EXPLOIT FULLY THESE OPPORTUNITIES. END SUMMARY.

¶2. THE U.S. MISSION TO THE UN AGENCIES IN ROME PROVIDES A VERY GOOD PLATFORM FOR PROMOTING AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD TO A DIVERSE AND INFLUENTIAL AUDIENCE. OUR MAJOR INTERLOCUTORS ARE AMBASSADORS AND AGRICULTURAL COUNSELORS FROM DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES POSTED TO THEIR PERMANENT MISSIONS TO THE UN AGENCIES IN ROME. THESE SENIOR OFFICIALS DEBATE LONG-TERM BIOTECH POLICY IN UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) POLICY-MAKING BODIES AND DISCUSS THE REAL-WORLD IMPLICATIONS OF BIOTECH FOOD AID AS MEMBERS OF THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM (WFP) EXECUTIVE BOARD. OUR OTHER MAJOR INTERLOCUTORS ARE SENIOR AND MID-LEVEL OFFICIALS AT THE FAO WHO ARE SHAPING FAO POLICY STATEMENTS AND MANAGING FAO PROGRAMS DEALING WITH BIOTECHNOLOGY.

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¶2. THIS CABLE PRESENTS A SHORT CHRONOLOGY OF MANY OF THE ACTIVITIES (OUTSIDE OF THE REGULAR MEETING SCHEDULE), WHICH U.S. MISSION ROME TOOK TO PROMOTE AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY ON BEHALF OF THE DEVELOPING WORLD.

JANUARY 2002: THE FRUIT OF LONG-TERM CONTACTS WITH FAO STAFF RESPONSIBLE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY, MISSION REPORTED TO WASHINGTON THAT THE FAO SOUGHT EXPERT GUIDANCE IN THE AREA OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS AS IT RELATES TO BIOTECHNOLOGY AND WOULD WELCOME U.S. ASSISTANCE. (02 ROME 106)

JANUARY 2002: THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE HOSTED A LUNCH FOR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM ZIMBABWE, TANZANIA, SOUTH AFRICA AND KENYA TO DISCUSS AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES ON AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY.

FEBRUARY 2002: THE ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE HOSTED A LUNCH FOR PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM INDONESIA, THAILAND, MALAYSIA, CHINA AND INDIA TO DISCUSS ASIAN PERSPECTIVES ON AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY.

FEBRUARY 2002: THE MISSION ORGANIZED A COFFEE SESSION WITH VISITING USG SPONSORED SCIENTIST AND BIOTECH ADVOCATE, DR. CHANNAPATNA PRAKASH, FOR SELECTED PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM SWEDEN, THE PHILIPPINES AND LESOTHO.

MARCH 2002: A SEMINAR ON "BIOTECH FOOD AID" HOSTED BY THE BELGIAN DELEGATION TO THE FAO PROVIDED INVITED U.S. MISSION STAFF AN OPPORTUNITY TO ARGUE IN FAVOR OF FAO TAKING A PRO- UNCLASSIFIED

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BIOTECH APPROACH AND SUPPORT THE SAFETY OF U.S. DONATED BIOTECH FOOD AID BEFORE 20 PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES FROM DEVELOPED AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES.

APRIL 2002: MISSION NOTIFIED FAO THAT THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY HAD POSTED AN FAO PAPER ON GENETIC END USE RESTRICTION TECHNOLOGY (GURTS) THAT HAD NOT BEEN APPROVED BY ANY FAO BODY. (THE PAPER WAS BIASED AND NOT SUPPORTED BY SOUND SCIENCE.) FAO CALLED IT TO THE ATTENTION OF THE CBD SECRETARIAT. (4/3/02 HEILEMAN/FRESCO LETTER)

MAY 2002: MISSION SUCCESSFULLY REQUESTED FUNDING FOR FIVE MID-LEVEL DIPLOMATICS TO PARTICIPATE IN AN INTERNATIONAL VISITORS PROGRAM VISIT TO THE U.S. BIOTECHNOLOGY WAS ONE OF THE TOPICS ADDRESSED IN THE VISIT. (03 ROME 503)

JULY 2002: WORLD FOOD SUMMIT FIVE YEARS LATER: U.S. DELEGATION SUCCESSFULLY NEGOTIATED INCLUSION OF STRONG BIOTECH LANGUAGE IN THE DECLARATION OF THE WORLD FOOD SUMMIT

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FIVE YEARS LATER. MISSION AND WASHINGTON AGENCIES ORGANIZED A U.S./IFPRI SPONSORED SYMPOSIUM ON BIOTECHNOLOGY, FEATURING NORMAN BORLAUG AND OPENED BY THE NIGERIAN MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE. A STANDING ROOM AUDIENCE OF WORLD FOOD SUMMIT DELEGATES AND ITALIAN OFFICIALS HEARD POWERFUL PRESENTATIONS IN FAVOR OF AGRICULTURAL BIOTECHNOLOGY FOR THE DEVELOPING WORLD. (BBC MORNING NEWS PICKED UP THE EVENT.) ACTING PERM REP HOSTED A DINNER FOR BORLAUG AND OTHER SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS WITH SENIOR FAO OFFICIALS AND OTHER WORLD FOOD SUMMIT HEADS OF DELEGATION. (02 ROME 3214)

JULY AND AUGUST 2002: MISSION STAFF MET WITH FAO DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL TO INFORM HIM THAT FAO WAS BEING CITED AS A SOURCE OF INCORRECT INFORMATION ON THE CARTAGENA PROTOCOL, WITH DISASTROUS IMPLICATIONS FOR SOUTHERN AFRICAN ACCEPTANCE OF BIOTECH FOOD AID. THE FAO AGREED TO CORRECT THE DOCUMENT IN QUESTION (A LETTER TO UN UNDERSECRETARY OSHIMA) AND ADVISE ITS REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVES. (02 ROME 3508)

AUGUST 2002: ACTING CHIEF OF MISSION AND AGRICULTURAL COUNSELOR MET WITH FAO DIRECTOR GENERAL AND FAO SENIOR STAFF TO ENSURE THAT FAO WAS FOLLOWING UP ON ITS AGREEMENT TO CORRECT THE MISINFORMATION. (02 3508, 3676, 3899, 4048)

AUGUST 2002: MISSION MAINTAINED DAILY COMMUNICATION WITH SENIOR FAO OFFICIALS ON THE NEED FOR THE FAO TO SEND A UNCLASSIFIED

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POSITIVE PUBLIC MESSAGE ON THE SAFETY OF BIOTECH FOOD AID. THE FAO/WHO STATEMENT ON BIOTECH ENGINEERED FOOD ISSUED AT THE WORLD SUMMIT ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT REFLECTED THIS UNREMITTING MISSION (BACKED UP BY OTHER USG) PRESSURE.

JULY 2002: MISSION SUCCESSFULLY MOBILIZED USG FUNDING FOR TWO DEVELOPING COUNTRY PARTICIPANTS AND ONE USG PARTICIPANT TO PARTICIPATE IN AN FAO EXPERT WORKSHOP ON "THE IMPACT OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS ON BIOTECHNOLOGY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES." (02 ROME 3648).

AUGUST 2002: MISSION STAFF EXPRESSED CONCERN WITH PROPOSED SCOPE OF WORK OF WORLD BANK (WB) INTERNATIONAL ASSESSMENT ON AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO FAO'S ASSISTANT DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR AGRICULTURE. FAO WILL BE CLOSELY INVOLVED IN THE WB EFFORT.

OCTOBER 2002: MISSION WORKED CLOSELY WITH WFP STAFF ON PREPARATION OF THE BACKGROUND DOCUMENT ON BIOTECH FOOD PRESENTED TO THE WORLD FOOD PROGRAM EXECUTIVE BOARD SESSION. AMBASSADOR HALL'S STATEMENT TO THE BOARD ARGUED STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF SOUTHERN AFRICAN NATIONS ACCEPTING BIOTECH ENGINEERED FOOD AID TO PREVENT A HUMANITARIAN DISASTER IN THE REGION. USDEL WORKED CLOSELY WITH BOARD RAPPORTEUR TO ENSURE THAT THE BOARD'S CONCLUSION FAITHFULLY REFLECTED U.S. VIEWS. (02 ROME 5226)

OCTOBER 2002: MISSION WROTE TO FAO NOTING NUMEROUS ERRORS IN AN FAO PUBLICATION, "THE BIOTECHNOLOGY GLOSSARY." TAKEN TOGETHER THE ERRORS SHOWED A FAILURE TO SUBJECT THE GLOSSARY TO A BALANCED AND SCIENTIFIC REVIEW AND REVEALED AN ANTI- UNCLASSIFIED

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BIOTECH BIAS. THE FAO WELCOMED THE COMMENTS AND PROMISED TO TAKE THEM INTO CONSIDERATION IN FUTURE EDITIONS. AN FAO SENIOR STAFFER ASKED FOR U.S. COLLABORATION ON FUTURE EDITIONS. (HEILEMAN/FRESCO LETTER)

OCTOBER 2002: FAO COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES. U.S. WORKED WITH LIKE-MINDED COUNTRIES TO ENSURE THAT THE (ANTI-BIOTECH) FAO CODE OF CONDUCT ON BIOTECHNOLOGY REMAINS MORIBUND. USDEL SUCCESSFULLY ARGUED FOR U.S. COMMENTS ON GENETIC END USE TECHNOLOGY (GURTS) TO BE APPENDED TO A GURTS REPORT TO BE SENT TO THE CONVENTION ON BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY. THE U.S. STATEMENT CALLED ON FAO TO PROVIDE ACCURATE SCIENTIFIC INFORMATION ON BIOTECHNOLOGY, PARTICULARLY BEARING IN MIND THE CURRENT FOOD CRISIS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

(02 ROME 5323)

NOVEMBER 2002: MISOFF CALLED FAO'S ATTENTION TO A MISLEADING AND BIASED STATEMENT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE COMMISSION ON GENETIC RESOURCES AS REGARDS BIOTECHNOLOGY IN THE FAO'S

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ELECTRONIC BIOTECH NEWS. FAO CALLED IT "A CUT AND PASTE ERROR" AND CORRECTED THE STATEMENT.

NOVEMBER 2002: MISSION STAFF ORGANIZED MEETINGS WITH SENIOR FAO STAFF FOR VISITING OES DAS BURNAM TO DISCUSS, INTER ALIA, BIOTECH ENGINEERING AND ITS IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT.

NOVEMBER 2002: MISSION STAFF BRIEFED A VISITING GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTING OFFICE (GAO) TEAM LOOKING AT THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN FOOD EMERGENCY, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF BIOTECH FOOD AID. MISSION STAFF ORGANIZED MEETINGS FOR THE GAO INVESTIGATORS TO DISCUSS THIS QUESTION WITH FAO AND WFP STAFF.

DECEMBER 2002: AMBASSADOR HALL PRESENTED U.S. VIEWS ON THE GROWING HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY IN SOUTHERN AFRICA TO SELECTED ROME-BASED PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVES TO THE UN FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO) AND ASKED THE ASSEMBLED REPRESENTATIVES (FROM OECD DONOR COUNTRIES AND RECIPIENT COUNTRIES IN AFRICA) TO SPEAK OUT ON THE SAFETY OF U.S. BIOTECH ENGINEERED FOOD AID. AMEMBASSY VATICAN FOLLOWED UP WITH A SIMILAR MEETING WITH AMBASSADORS ACCREDITED TO THE HOLY SEE. (02 ROME 5831)

13. AMBASSADOR'S PRESS RELEASES AND ARTICLES COVERING BIOTECH ISSUES - SEPTEMBER 26- DECEMBER 19, 2002

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10/10 PRESS CONFERENCE - TOGETHER WITH AMB. SULLIVAN IN HARARE, AMB. HALL DETAILED THE CRITICAL SITUATION IN ZIMBABWE, FOLLOWING A NUMBER OF FIELD VISITS AND MEETINGS WITH NGOS AND GOZ OFFICIALS. THE PRESS CONFERENCE WAS WELL ATTENDED AND GENERATED COVERAGE FROM THE UK'S THE GUARDIAN, THE AP, THE GOZ DAILY HERALD AND A NUMBER OF OTHERS.

10/14 RADIO INTERVIEW - UPON THE RETURN FROM HIS TRIP, HE CONDUCTED AN INTERVIEW WITH SW RADIO AFRICA, ZIMBABWE'S ONLY INDEPENDENT RADIO STATION, FUNDED IN PART BY THE US. HE SPOKE ABOUT THE TRIP AND HIS CONCERN WITH GOZ POLICIES.

10/22 INTERVIEW - REUTERS ARTICLE ON CRISIS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA.

10/23 QUOTE - THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE FEATURED A QUOTE FROM THE REUTERS STORY REGARDING ZIMBABWE THAT WAS PUBLISHED DURING THE WFP EXECUTIVE BOARD (EB) MEETING.

10/23 PRESS RELEASE - AMB. HALL'S STATEMENT TO THE WFP EB MEETING REGARDING HIS TRIP TO SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THE NEED FOR BIOTECH FOOD WAS PRESENTED TO THE ENTIRE BOARD AND COPIES WERE PROVIDED TO EACH INDIVIDUAL DELEGATION.

11/13 OP-ED - "AN ARGUMENT THAT KEEPS AFRICA HUNGRY" ON BIOTECH FOOD AID WAS PUBLISHED IN BOTH THE EUROPEAN AND US VERSIONS OF THE FINANCIAL TIMES.

11/28 INTERVIEW - THANKSGIVING ARTICLE IN AMB. HALL'S HOMETOWN PAPER, THE DAYTON DAILY NEWS, ABOUT HIS NEW POSITION, THE SITUATION IN AFRICA AND BIOTECH FOOD.
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11/30 ARTICLES - THE AP STORY FILED FROM HIS INTERVIEW WITH THE DAYTON DAILY NEWS RESULTED IN COVERAGE IN BOTH THE WASHINGTON POST AND THE NEW YORK TIMES

12/5 PRESS CONFERENCE - DURING A TRIP TO BRUSSELS TO SPEAK WITH MEMBERS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND COMMISSION, US/EU ORGANIZED A PRESS CONFERENCE THAT RESULTED IN A REUTERS STORY AND A STORY ON THE SPANISH WIRE, EFE.

12/7 STORY - CORRIERE DELLA SERRA, THE MOST INFLUENTIAL ITALIAN DAILY, CARRIED A STORY ON AFRICA AND BIOTECH FOOD, BASED ON AMB. HALL'S COMMENTS IN BRUSSELS.

12/9 FOLLOW-UP STORY - REUTERS CARRIED ANOTHER PIECE QUOTING AMB. HALL REGARDING THE ZAMBIAN DECISION TO REJECT BIOTECH FOOD.

¶4. COMMENT: A LOOK BACK AT THE MISSION'S BIOTECH ADVOCACY

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